

working of the system of competition in the two cases. Amongst architects, I think it will generally be admitted that it is highly unsatisfactory, leading to practices which have, not without reason, lowered the general opinion of professional men, and leading, also, to constant disappointment in employers, who from ignorance require what is impossible, and only find out, when too late, that the architect they have chosen has either only given them part of what they expected, or has led them into an outlay much beyond what they intended. Thus the profession loses caste, and employers lose confidence, without any compensating advantage to either. On the other hand, the system of limited tendering among respectable builders is, I believe, considered by the best architects to be the only mode of arriving at the fair value that their clients ought to pay for their work; not, I would be understood, because builders cannot be trusted to ask only fair prices, but because, from various circumstances, one builder can afford to execute work at a lower price than another, even though his profit may be the same. At any rate, it cannot be asserted that builders have hitherto lost either profit or reputation by the system; and if competition amongst builders were confined to persons of known respectability, the gross discrepancies so frequently seen in the columns of *THE BUILDER* would probably soon disappear. C. F.

THE CAMBRIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION, AT LUDLOW.

THE sixth annual meeting of the Cambrian Archaeological Association commenced at Ludlow, on Monday last week. The members made excursions to the various objects of interest in the neighbourhood, and the evenings were occupied with the reading of papers, &c. In the absence of the president (the Right Hon. Earl Cawdor, F.R.S.), the chair was taken by Mr. W. W. E. Wynn, F.S.A. one of the vice-presidents, who, on behalf of his lordship, resigned the office to the president-elect, the Hon. R. H. Clive, M.P. who took the chair, and delivered his inaugural address, in course of which he gave a brief account of some remarkable ruins in the neighbourhood. The remainder of the first evening sitting was occupied with business matters. On Tuesday the members visited Stoke Castle, Tangley-hill, where there are vestiges of a British encampment called the Bury Ditches, Clun Castle, Hopton Castle, Clungunford, &c. At the evening meeting the following papers were read:—On the Fitawarine Family, by the Rev. W. Basil Jones; on the Distinctive Peculiarities of various Races in this Country, by Mr. J. C. Symonds; and on some Excavations at Castell-y-Bere, in Merionethshire, by Mr. W. W. E. Wynn. On Wednesday morning the members visited Stanton Lacy Church, and afterwards lunched with the president at Oakley Park. At the morning meeting, Mr. E. Rogers read a paper "on the Deposits of Gold and Silver Coin in North Wales," and Mr. R. K. Penon, a paper on Ludlow Church, in which he expressed his opinion, afterwards supported by examination of details in the church itself, that the present edifice is built upon the foundations, in a great part, of a structure existing in the thirteenth century. "My impression," said Mr. Penon, "is that it consisted of a chancel, with two chapels adjoining, a nave and a north and south aisle. I do not believe there were transepts, because I find a weather moulding built into the lower portions of the north transept which protected the original roof of the aisles when the transept was built. I am not certain as to the existence of a central tower, and I am inclined to fancy that there was not one. If my theory is correct, as the church was not at that period cruciform, the constructive arrangements would not warrant the introduction of such a feature. I shall be able to show you traces of this church in the interior of the north chancel aisle, in the walls of the south aisle; and in the room over the present south porch you will find a portion of the Early English corbel table which ran along the top of the wall under the eaves of the roof. Probably one of the buttresses of this date re-

mains to the east of the present porch. In this wall there is a water drain connected with a recess further eastwards than the present south door. It may have been a holy water stoup attached to an earlier doorway than that now leading to the church, which is unmistakably of early English date. I should say that the internal jambs of the windows of the aisle are of the same period. You will bear in mind that there were no transepts, and that the wall of the south aisle was a continuation of that of the south chancel aisle. Proceeding to the western front, the Early English basement remains; and in the north front there are now the bases of columns belonging to the early doorway in the north aisle. The internal mouldings of this door attest the fact. In continuing our examination along the northern wall we reach the present north chancel aisle, where the string under the windows has been allowed to remain. Further east, in what is called the high chancel, are remains of early work, the most remarkable instance of which is the external opening into the chamber at the back of the altar." The paper was concluded with some remarks on the additions made at a later date.

After the visit to Ludlow Church, at the evening meeting, papers were read by Mr. Matthew Moggridge, "On a Cruciform Mound near Margam, in Glamorganshire," by Viscount Dungannon, "On the final Completion of the Excavations at Valle Crucis Abbey," and by the Rev. Mr. Webb, of Tretire, "On the Roll of the Household Expenses of Swinfen, Bishop of Hereford, who died in 1192."

On Thursday the excursion was to Leintwardine, Brandon Camp, Bampton, Bryan Castle, Coxall Knoll, or Gaer Ditches, all in Herefordshire. In the evening a paper on the "Last Battle of Caractacus" was read by Dr. Davies, of Sidbury, and Mr. Pigeon, of Shrewsbury. Mr. E. A. Freeman also read a paper on Leominster Priory Church; and Sir Roderick Murchison made some remarks "On District."

ARCHITECTURAL COMPETITIONS.

The British Hospital Competition.—We are told that Mr. Giggell's plan has been selected. We may have something to say hereafter.

Commercial Travellers' School Competition.—We understand that in more instances than one, competitors for the Commercial Travellers' Schools have not only submitted plans, but have sent round lithographed copies of them with printed explanations, to each individual member of the committee. Printed descriptions of designs submitted have, in like manner, been sent, without plans, and remarks tending to prejudice the committee against a particular style of architecture, "a fashion of the present day," as the author designates it. This must be regarded as taking an undue advantage and unfair to the other competitors, and should be looked at suspiciously by the committee, if they are determined to act justly.

ROUND TOWERS IN SCOTLAND.

YOUR description of the round towers you saw in Ireland, so graphically given, leads me to describe one in Scotland which are not known to tourists. There are some few in England, but those I have seen are scarcely worth describing, more than as to the shape agreeing with those in Ireland, whilst those in Scotland have the finish and ornamentation of the Irish towers.

THE ROUND TOWER OF BRECHIN.

This round tower is attached to the ancient cathedral, and is, perhaps, the best specimen in existence: it is built of a bright-coloured stone, different from that used in the cathedral, and has sixty courses of hewn stone laid regularly: its height is 85 feet to the cornice, and the stone roof terminates with eight sides, like the spire of a church, and is 15 feet high, terminating in a vane, and having four windows with cut stone pediments in the alternate spaces of the roof; the cornice being part of the first course of the roofing stones;—total height, 100 feet from the ground: the diameter

at the base is 16 feet, and the entrance from the church is by a low door with cut stone mouldings and pointed arch, but without any other ornament. There is an external blind doorway on the south side, which is highly enriched, and evidently built with the tower, as the courses run into the mouldings: it has two arches, one within the other in relief: on the top of the largest is a crucifix, and a band or knot connects the two arches, and in the recess on each side between the arches there are two figures, one of the Virgin Mary and another of St. John, who holds a cup and lamb: at the bottom of the outer arch and sculptured on the wall of the tower are two beasta couchant: on each side of the crucifix are two raised stones, having nothing carved upon them, but intended for it. The eill of this door is 5 feet from the ground: there is no appearance of a door ever having been in this place, as the stones are perfect.

THE TOWER OF DUNROBIN, KYRK OF CLYNE PARISH.

is situate 150 feet from the old parish church of Clyne, in Sutherlandshire: it has the bell now hanging in it; is built on the top of a hill adjoining the church, which gives a greater height by the elevated position than what it would otherwise have from the tower being only 25 feet to the top of the stone roof, and 14 feet diameter at the base: the eill of the door is about 7 feet from the ground. This tower is seen for miles round: it is built in irregular courses, and of a stone, the same as the church, but not of the same description as the quarries of the neighbourhood—perhaps Norman stone. The wall is 3 feet 2 inches thick at the base.

P.S. The name in the Irish language for the round tower is clogagh (clogh-theagh), the English of which is bell-house, and they never have been called any other: some antiquaries have adopted the name fire-tower, but do not attempt to maintain it otherwise than by the obscurity in which their erection is involved.

W. HUGHES.

A CHEAP CONTRACTOR IN A FIX.

IN the Lambeth County Court, recently, an action was brought by a Mr. Brown, builder, against a gentleman named Murgatroyd, to recover the sum of 25*l*. From the evidence adduced on the part of the plaintiff, it appeared the defendant, requiring some repairs to be done to his premises, signified that he was open to the offer of any builder who would contract to do the same, and that the lowest tender would be accepted, subject to certain usual conditions. One of a number of tenders sent in, the plaintiff's was found to be the lowest, at 25*l*.; the highest being at the disproportionate figure of 110*l*. Very shortly after the plaintiff had signed the contract, he discovered his mistake, and wished the defendant to annul the agreement. Mr. Murgatroyd would not accede to this, or abate one jot in the fulfilment of the contract, considering that as a specification had been prepared by his surveyor, and plaintiff had contracted upon that specification, he ought not to have tendered at a figure he could have known was unremunerative.

The plaintiff upon this scamped the work, using old materials, a mixture of size, whiting, and ochre, for paint, and deals of a thickness but little stouter than veneers. Upon the completion of the job he applied for payment, and was referred to defendant's surveyor, who ordered Mr. Brown to pull all his work down, and to perform his contract to the strict letter of the specification. The plaintiff and his witnesses swore that the work was well done, and but a shade under the specification; one of the plaintiff's witnesses stating that he had been carefully through the work, and he considered it well worth 40*l*.

Mr. Bassell, for the defence, said this was one of those cases, in which a grasping man for business had met his deserts. It was a common occurrence for some builders when they saw tenders for work advertised, to tender at a price which they well knew no tradesman could compete against, unless he swindled his timber merchant and other building-materialists. The profit they looked for would arise from their performing the contract in the scamping way the plaintiff had done in this instance, and also in the expectation of making some alterations from the specification, for which they invariably charged 100 per cent. over the fair trade price. It was a system at once ruinous to the fair builder, dishonest